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UNCLAS PARIS 008280

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

FROM USMISSION TO UNESCO PARIS
FOR NAIROBI FOR KAREN LEVINE

E.O.: 12958: N/A

TAGS: [XA](#) [UNESCO](#)

SUBJECT: USUNESCO-UNESCO TO PARTICIPATE IN AFRICAN
UNION SUMMIT IN KHARTOUM, PREPARATORY MINISTERIALS TO
BE HELD IN NAIROBI AND DAKAR

Ref: Paris 7715

1. (SBU) UNESCO Director General Matsuura, accompanied by the Assistant Directors General for Culture and Education will attend an African Union summit in Khartoum on culture and education in January 23-24. The total UNESCO delegation will number 12-15. In anticipation of the Khartoum meeting, a preparatory ministerial on culture will be held in Nairobi December 8-14. Another meeting on education will be held in Dakar January 10-13. When asked by the DCM why the DG and ADGs are traveling to Khartoum at this time, the ADG for Culture said that this was a decision of the African Union that they could not go against.

2. (SBU) In a subsequent conversation, a member of the Kenyan delegation told the DCM that he had raised with his capital concerns about a summit being held in Khartoum because of potential security problems. He also said that Khartoum had been chosen by the AU as the venue to help the peace process, as well as to counter attempts to move the capital to other locations in the north or the south. He mentioned, too, that Kenya has been providing a lot of aid in southern Sudan, especially helping to train teacher trainers.

3. (U) The Nairobi meeting will begin with a gathering of inter-governmental experts followed by a meeting of culture ministers December 13-14. The provisional agenda includes a discussion of common African positions on global issues including the cultural diversity convention, the African Cultural Charter of 1976, a review of the Dakar cultural action plan of 1992, the African world heritage fund and a segment on culture and education and the use of information technology. (Note: we looked for these items on the AU website but the site is seriously out of date.) Mounir Bouchenaki, the ADG for culture and Katerina Stenou the head of the cultural policy office in the UNESCO cultural sector will be attending the Nairobi meeting. The Kenyan diplomat also invited the US government to send an observer to attend the meetings.

4. (SBU) When the DCM asked Katerina Stenou on December 2 if there would be a lot of pushing to get states to ratify the cultural diversity convention, she felt that there will probably be more discussion about getting the European countries to deliver on the promises they made to get African support for the convention. (Comment: we have long wondered what kinds of promises were made to get the complete support of African countries for a document that primarily helps countries from the "north.") Stenou did share a copy of a speech she gave at a recent culture ministers meeting in Dakar that portrayed the CD convention in glowing terms.

5. (U) Comment: The US made clear its displeasure with the portion of the UNESCO budget devoted to supporting the cultural diversity convention by taking the unprecedented step (at UNESCO) of calling for a vote on the budget and voting against it. What we now voted against is coming to pass. We will continue to make the point that we do not want to see the secretariat involved in advocacy for the convention.

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